

Sitting on Governor Christie's desk is legislation to increase New Jersey's minimum wage by \$1.25 to \$8.50, the first increase since 2005. Governor Christie should sign the bill today and, in the process, lift many thousands of struggling New Jersey residents out of poverty.

According to New Jersey Policy Perspective, if the minimum wage were increased to \$8.50 per hour, [about 537,535 New Jersey workers](#) would receive an average raise of \$816. Increasing take-home pay is one simple way to help grow our economy and ensure that hard-working families and individuals are not living in or near poverty.

In 2007, after a decade of stagnant wages for working families, I successfully fought to increase the minimum wage nationwide to \$7.25. But five years have since passed, and we now need to take further steps to encourage broad-based wage growth, which will ensure that our economy takes advantage of the talents of the entire population.

The bill now on Governor Christie's desk would mark an important step forward for New Jersey workers, but it would apply only within our state's borders. Congress should also act at the federal level to raise the minimum wage nationwide. I am an original cosponsor of Fair Minimum Wage Act to increase the federal minimum wage over three years from \$7.25 to \$9.80 per hour.

Rebuilding for the New Normal

Last Thursday, I testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works at a hearing entitled ["Sandy and Its Impacts: A Local Perspective."](#)

I urged the committee members to support emergency funding to help our region recover from Sandy. And I emphasized that storms like Sandy are, tragically, the new normal, notwithstanding denials of climate change. We must not simply replace the structures damaged by Sandy; we must build resilient infrastructure to withstand tomorrow's superstorms. This means not only attending to Manasquan on the coast but also Manville inland, and not only Seaside Heights but also South River.

As New Jersey continues the long process of rebuilding, FEMA has extended certain deadlines for local governments and nonprofit groups to apply for disaster aid. [Organizations now have 30 extra days](#), until December 30, to apply.

According to FEMA, as of December 3, the agency has received 1,098 requests for public assistance and approved 24 large projects totaling about \$58 million.

Help with Federal Agencies

Since the current session of Congress began in January 2011, I have worked to help resolve nearly 4,000 problems brought to my attention by constituents.

What kinds of problems can I help you address? To give you a sense, of the cases I've worked on over the past two years:

- **31 percent** were related to obtaining passports, immigrant and non-immigrant visitor visas, naturalization and citizenship, permanent residency, immigrant work authorization and related matters with the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services or U.S. Department of State.
- **16 percent** were related to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid or other types of health insurance.
- **10 percent** were related to veteran education, pension, and health-care benefits or other related matters with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or service in one of the branches of the U.S. military.
- **7 percent** were related to mortgage and banking issues.
- **4 percent** were related to taxation and the Internal Revenue Service.

If I can help you address these or other problems with federal agencies, please contact me by

visiting <http://holt.house.gov/contact> or calling 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (1-877-874-4658).

Sincerely,

Rush Holt
Member of Congress